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UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000622

DEPARTMENT FOR H, ANDREW MACDERMOTT
DEPARTMENT FOR RM/F/DFS/FO/AA/CAA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OREP](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [AFIN](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: CODEL THOMPSON, MAY 28-30, 2009

REF: (A) SECSTATE 52342 (B) BUENOS AIRES 0597

1. The Ambassador warmly welcomes Representative Bennie G. Thompson and the congressional delegation he is leading to Argentina. The purpose of the trip is to examine counterterrorism cooperation, emerging threats, maritime security, and Department of Homeland Security operations. See ref B for Embassy scenesetter.

2. Control Officer will be Political Officer Ted Craig.
Email: CraigTJ@state.gov, cellphone (011-54-9-11) 3210-1217
Office telephone (54-11) 5777-4858/4656, Embassy Phone (011-54-11) 5777-4234. Embassy Hours: 08:45 am to 05:45 pm.

Administrative point of contact will be Management Officer Dorothy Sarro. Email: SarroDK@state.gov, Cellphone: (011-54-9-11) 4198-8662; Home Phone: (011-54-11) 4802-6607.

3. Post has secured reservations at the following hotel:

EMPERADOR HOTEL
AV.. LIBERTADOR 420
TEL: 54-11-4131-4004
FAX: 54-11-4131-3910
EMAIL: RESERVAS@HOTEL-EMPERADOR.COM.AR
WWW.HOTEL-EMPERADOR.COM.AR
30 ROOMS RESERVED

Hotel rate for standard room including tax is US \$196.00 and breakfast is included. Cancellation policy is as follows: Cancellations must be made within 24 hours of arrival otherwise the hotel will charge for one night stay. Late checkout (6pm) requests will be granted depending on availability or can be guaranteed for half the daily rate. Post will provide meet and greet assistance and transportation throughout the Codel's stay in Argentina.

4. Visas: Visitors are reminded that Argentina requires visas in U.S. diplomatic and official passports for official travel. Persons traveling on official business and carrying diplomatic or official passports who arrive without a valid visa may be denied entry and sent back to point of origin. The Embassy is unable to secure entry of travelers who arrive without visas.

5. Airport tax: Official visitors, holding diplomatic or regular passports, are required to pay the airport tax. For international flights, the tax is US \$29 per passenger (vat-exempt) or peso equivalent, payable in cash, with traveler's checks or credit cards.

6. Threat assessment:

A. Political violence/terrorism: liaison with host government police and security forces indicate there is little threat to U.S. citizens (official visitors, business visitors, tourists) from indigenous terrorist organizations in Argentina. There are no violent domestic groups currently active in this country that are

specifically targeting U.S. interests. However, given the presence of members of and support for extremist international terrorist groups such as Hizbollah in the tri-border region of Argentina (Misiones province), visitors here cannot discount the possibility of terrorist activity, to include random acts of anti-American violence.

¶B. Crime: Petty street crime in the city of Buenos Aires and the immediate suburbs continues to be a problem for residents and visitors alike. Burglaries in the more fashionable suburbs have been a particular problem. Visitors to the city of Buenos Aires should be aware of problems with hotel security (i.e. thefts from room) and pickpockets or purse snatching on the streets and public transportation (buses and trains).

Pickpockets often work in pairs and employ a variety of ruses to victimize the unsuspecting visitor. In recent years, most crime affecting visitors has been non-violent; aggravated robberies, shootings, etc., while not completely unheard of in Buenos Aires were nonetheless uncommon. Recently, however, incidents of armed invasions of restaurants, shops and residences by criminal groups are being observed with greater frequency, and as a result, it is recommended that due caution be exercised when traveling about the city. However, in general, the crime level in Buenos Aires is less severe than large U.S. cities.

¶7. Accommodation exchange in pesos will be provided in hotel control room upon check-in.

¶8. Telephone Calls: As requested 8 cellular telephones will be provided. Visitors should bring fund cites or credit card to cover the cost of official international and in-country long distance landline telephone calls. International calling cards are

recommended.

¶9. Laptop Computers/Digital Cameras: Laptops/palm pilots, cellular phones and other electronic devices may not be brought into the Embassy without the prior approval of the regional security office. Personally owned laptops/palm pilots may not/not be used in the Embassy. USG-owned laptops may only be used in controlled access areas (CAA) if the user certifies that the computer has been continuously under the personal control of a cleared American throughout transit. If this requirement is not met, the laptop can only be used outside of the CAA. USG-owned palm pilots are under the same restrictions as cellular phones and other electronic devices, and may not be utilized within the CAA. At the embassy, all USG issued or personal cellular phones must be left outside of the CAA. Use of cellular phones outside of the CAA is not restricted. It should be noted that if traveler is bringing a cellular phone into the country, argentine law requires the traveler to declare the phone, including its value, when filling out the customs and immigration declaration form.

¶10. For further general information regarding travel to Argentina, travelers should consult the department of state internet site at <http://travel.state.gov/>, which includes the latest consular information sheet for Argentina.

¶11. This telegram has been cleared by the Deputy Chief of Mission.

WAYNE